



TOWN OF MANSFIELD
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE
Monday, August 9, 2004
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
Conference Room B

Minutes

Present: B. Clouette, A. Hawkins, E. Paterson, A. Whitham Blair

Staff: M. Berliner, M. Hart

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Bruce Clouette called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

2. Selection of Recorder/Secretary for the Committee

Matt Hart volunteered to serve as recorder for the meeting.

3. Opportunity for Public to Address the Committee

None

4. July 26, 2004 Meeting Minutes

The committee approved the minutes by consensus.

5. Staff Report on Related Activities

Matt Hart and Martin Berliner presented the committee with a report on related activities and work undertaken by staff. A group of town staff, including the town manager, assistant town manager, town planner, zoning enforcement officer and town attorney, has been meeting periodically to review issues relating to off-campus housing. Staff discussions have largely focused on three broad areas: 1) landlord-tenant issues; 2) violations of the town's zoning regulations; and 3) public nuisances such as garbage

and littering, large parties and neighborhood appearance. Matt also provided the committee members with a written document that summarizes the recent work undertaken by staff.

Marty suggested that if the committee wanted to provide some direction, staff could prepare an action plan to implement the recommendations. Mayor Paterson expressed some support for this idea, and commented that first we need to know how big the problem is. The committee members then discussed at length the various single family homes in town that appear to have recently converted to student housing

The Mayor also suggested that the committee consult with the National League of Cities and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities to research successful license to rent and related ordinances and programs. Staff has performed some of this work, and will perform additional research as the committee decides to move forward.

Marty suggested that there appears to be some support among the committee to look at adopting a local housing code for rental properties. The committee concurred with his assessment.

Alan Hawkins distributed an article concerning fire safety and student housing. Interestingly, the majority of fires and related deaths occur in off-campus housing.

Alison Whitham-Blair asked if we could legally differentiate between resident and non-resident landlords under a housing code. Marty doubted that was possible. He also explained that any efforts the town was to undertake with regard to a housing code would require significant time and effort, but that should not discourage the committee from giving the concept strong consideration.

6. Next Steps

Matt Hart suggested that the committee considering developing a set of strategies relating to enforcement, education and planning, that could be implemented over time. The committee appeared receptive to this idea, and asked staff to develop a proposal for the next meeting.

7. Other

None

8. Next Meeting

The committee tentatively scheduled its next meeting for 6:30 p.m. on September 13, 2004.

9. Adjournment

The committee adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Hart
Assistant Town Manager